

2477 Fairgrove Court
Cincinnati, OH 45244
December 6, 2001

Attorney General John Ashcroft
US Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Mr. Ashcroft:

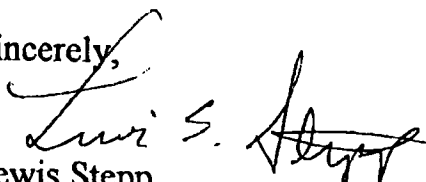
I am writing to thank you and all those with whom you worked for your successful efforts at settling the lawsuit against Microsoft. I realize that there are some who disagree with your decision for bringing this lawsuit to a close, but there are also many of us who appreciate the simpler, more integrated way that software works in the Windows environment.

There are some who laugh at the Microsoft "freedom to innovate" slogan. However, I remember the days of the text only "green screen" when IBM was the provider of PC operating systems. Microsoft did indeed "bet the company" on development and marketing of its Windows operating system. The company is truly a "David defeats Goliath" story. You can only do this if you provide a quality product at a reasonable price and you are a very strong competitor. Perhaps, Microsoft became an overzealous competitor, but if we had yielded to some of the punishments requested by the Microsoft competitors then we would have set legal precedents that could extinguish the innovate entrepreneurial spirit that brought us the Windows OS and the Internet.

I hate to think of the potential ramifications had this suit ultimately broken Microsoft into smaller pieces. The software market that depends on Microsoft established standards would have been in chaos, and many typical computer users, such as myself, would have suffered.

Because of your foresight, however, this eventuality will not happen. For this I am thankful.

Sincerely,


Lewis Stepp